

play pretend and find a friend

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/40883271) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/40883271>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warnings:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings , No Archive Warnings Apply
Categories:	M/M , Multi
Fandoms:	One Direction (Band) , Larry Stylinson - Fandom
Relationships:	Louis Tomlinson/Harry Styles , Harry Styles/Original Male Character , Louis Tomlinson/Original Female Character(s)
Characters:	Harry Styles , Louis Tomlinson , Gemma Styles , Anne Cox
Additional Tags:	Alternate Universe , Holidates , cute and fluffy , both of them are oblivious , they really like each other , Getting to Know Each Other , Made For Each Other
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2022-08-08 Words: 1,287 Chapters: 1/5

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by [neversaygoodbye](#)

Summary

Harry hasn't dated in forever until he meets Louis at the mall who offers to be his date for the holidays, chaos and unexpected love ensue.

or,

A 'Holidate' Au where Harry is absolutely mesmerised by Louis

Notes

I haven't written in forever cuz hospitals lol but now I'm back!

For someone who loves shopping as much as Harry, the mall looked bleak and distasteful two days after Christmas. After all, what could be a better reason to visit the mall than to return the six sizes too big pyjamas that your cousin got you for Christmas? Right, the person in front of you not having a receipt and having torn off the tag of the khakis he's trying to return. Harry looks around the store to try and catch a glimpse of the pyjamas he's holding and sure enough, they're not there. His relatives were trash, absolutely revolting trash.

"Why do I have to fucking suffer for another person's buffoonery?" Harry seethed through his teeth.

"Excuse me?" The guy in front of him turned around and oh, his eyes are blue.

"I asked why I have to suffer for your buffoonery, you buffoon," he says dismissively, staring at the cashier's name tag. Christina.

"Mate, it's not my fault that the girl that gave these to me without a receipt and tore the tag off," he says, clearly agitated.

"Maybe tell your girlfriend you hate them so much and have her return it."

"What makes you think I still know that girl?"

"Wow, you're such a fine specimen of arse, you left a girl because she got you beige pants."

"It was not the pants, whatever I don't have to explain my actions to someone who got pyjamas for Christmas." And Harry was scathing.

"Hey my Christmas was shitty alright but you're making Boxing Day shitty for me now."

"Can't have been worse than mine. A girl I went on two dates with took me to spend Christmas at her parent's place and made me wear the most horrifying sweater known to humanity."

"Well, I was sat at the kid's table because I couldn't take more of my entire family rambling about how I've been single forever so that's definitely not better than yours."

"She got me a gift and expected one back even though we agreed there would be no gifts."

"My cousin got me pyjamas six sizes too big because she thought I would pity eat my way to the size of a lumberjack," Harry spits and the lad laughs. It's not okay how much validation Harry gets from that.

"Are those khakis?" a voice calls out from behind them and Harry turns around. "I'll pay you ten pounds for them."

"Nah mate they definitely cost more than that," he says and Harry laughs.

"Come one mate, you'll never be able to return them and I'm pretty sure you'll never wear them. Hey, I'll throw in a coupon for three for one pretzel," the lad says and Harry grabs the khakis.

"I'll give you the pyjamas and the pants for fifteen pounds and the coupon," Harry says before the blue-eyed lad has something to say.

"Thanks, mate." And Harry nods, smiling.

"Oh come on, why did you do that?" he asks, pushing back his hair.

"Because you're a brat. I'm Harry," he says, putting out his hand.

"I'm Louis and you're giving me the fifteen quid. I don't eat pretzels." Louis takes his hand.

Harry does end up getting pretzels and tea with Louis, and he does end up walking with Louis around the mall. It's quite interesting that this is the same guy he was calling a buffoon. He's listening to a very graphic description of how the girl convinced Louis to stay for Christmas morning with a blowjob and he's sure that Louis is completely straight. A fucking bumner is what this is.

"Are you sure you don't want a bite?" he asks, holding up the warm fluffy bread. Louis shakes his head.

"It's terrible for your body, you don't know the stuff they put into this."

"Uh yeah, it's filled with a comforting warmth that makes me happy," he says pointedly and Louis snickers. "What are you anyway? Some kinda athlete?" he asks, definitely not staring at the way Louis' shoulders are defined even through his jumper.

"Uh yeah, I'm a forward for QPR," he replies sheepishly. "What do you do then? You know my entire history now."

"I work in Customer Service for La Roche Posay and I am an online tutor for Maths."

"So you're the smart kind?"

"I wouldn't say that."

"Nah I'd say you're pretty smart. I can't do maths to save my life, gave up after my A levels."

"You play footie, that's pretty cool. I've got three left feet." Louis snorts and Harry feels oddly warm.

"Hey, since you're so smart-" Harry cuts him off.

"Never said so, mate."

"Let me finish. Since you're so smart, we could be each other's date on holidays. Say I could go to your family's Christmas dinner and you could come with me to a New Year's party that my mates from the club are hosting," he offers and Harry almost jumps at him with a yes. Louis' got a smile that could sell water to an ocean and Harry realises he cannot show his enthusiasm that quickly.

"No way, this is a pity offer," he says, planting his feet strongly on the ground.

"For me, sure. I've got no one to take to this party. And see, if we go then there are no expectations for anything. We'll go together, have a good time and there'll be no khakis or awkward mornings in hideous sweaters. Besides, neither of us is left alone and stranded on a holiday at the kid's table," Louis explains and Harry thanks the gods for his stoic face.

"Nuh-uh, this friends-with-benefits thing never works out, it gets messy with too many awkward feelings and one of the pair with a broken heart," he says firmly.

"Alright then, no sex. We'll just pretend to be boyfriends and head on our own ways after our dates or should I say, holidays?" Louis winks and Harry might as well say yes.

"So no strings attached, we only meet on holidays and it's all casual and there's no pressure to impress?" he asks, already knowing that he would've said yes from the very start.

"Exactly on point." Louis has already taken out his phone and opened up the contacts app.

"Oddly confident aren't you? What? Never had a guy or girl say no to you?" he asks, amused by Louis' bewildered expression.

"Actually, no, I am just that handsome. Now, your number please," Louis says, handing over his phone to Harry.

"What makes you think I won't run off with it or even, give you a fake number?"

"You could give me a fake number and I'd think of it as bad luck. But I'm a professional football player so it'd be a little hard to run away from me," he answers easily as Harry types in his phone number. "I'll send you a text."

"What if I block your number or don't respond?"

"Think about responding."

"I won't." Harry is smiling as he walks away.

"Think about it," he says loudly as Harry is already up the escalator.

"I won't," he shakes his head with a laugh."

"I have tickets to the party at XOYO!"

"There's a slight chance I'll respond," he says with a middle finger and catches Louis' smile. It's been since forever he's been on a date or even tried to talk to a guy. Robert had left a bad

taste for men in his mouth because he'd rather have been balls deep in a barista named Everest than go on a picnic with Harry. But Louis is nice and a good starter for him to start looking to date again. It's simply an added bonus that it's casual and he doesn't have to try.

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